DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 107 590 SO 008 426

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TITLE The School as a Democratic Institution: The Problems of Teaching Social Studies in the Federal Republic of Germany.
INSTITUTION Inter Nationes, Bonn (West Germany).
PUB DATE Dec 74
NOTE 11p.; Best copy available
JOURNAL CIT Bildung und Wissenchaft (Education and Science in the Federal Republic of Germany); n12-74 p173-180 Dec 1974

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Comparative Education; Course Descriptions; *Curriculum Development; *Democratic Values; Educational Environment; Educational Objectives; Educational Problems; Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; *Political Socialization; *Social Studies; Student Development
IDENTIFIERS *Federal Republic of Germany

ABSTRACT

In recent years, political and social studies have been under revision in the individual states of the Federal Republic of Germany. Many states have issued framework guidelines for the various school branches and levels to provide teachers with orientation aids. Progressive educators see the goal of political and social studies as being more than just the imparting of knowledge via political, social, economic and legal institutions. They are more concerned with awakening interest in these things with the aid of a knowledge of interrelationships and events. The goal is the articulate citizen capable of criticism and thus the creation of the preconditions for democracy and further democratization. Two learning objectives developed by the state Northrhine-Westphalia are the ability and willingness to think in terms of political alternatives, and the ability and willingness to work as a member of different social groups and to display open-mindedness. These objectives are to be associated directly with concrete teaching processes so that the school is a public showcase of a democratic institution. (Author/DE)

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Education and Science in the Federal Republic of Germany

SPECIAL TOPIC

The school as a democratic institution

The problems of teaching social studies in the Federal Republic of Germany

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The school as a democratic institution

The problems of teaching social studies in the Federal Republic of Germany

I.

A New Subject – Modernization or Progress?

(INP). Günther Grass, German writer and committed democrat, whose books also became famous beyond the frontiers of the Federal Republic of Germany, and whose election campaign activities on behalf of the Social/Liberal Coalition Government were for numerous young citizens the signal to bid farewell to political abstinence practised hitherto, is the author of the following sentence: "The arrogance of political power and the ignorance of politically abstemious members of the public correspond to and promote one another. Whereever the citizen abstains with dignity, politics are left to the 'makers' and diluted to mere formulae."

Educational theoreticians attribute the still common authoritarian political attitude held by parents, teachers and pupils and the apparent dearth of democratic commitment in the Federal Republic to two things: on the one hand to the non political, consumer-orientated consciousness predominant in society and thus in the home, on the other to a school which does not yet depart sufficiently from this consciousness and thus in each case reflects the attitude prevailing in society – both of which can be found in curricula, textbooks, teachers' attitudes and teacher training.

However, the departure from the classical school subject – such as 'national studies' taught until very recently and which, in the main, corresponded to the attitude and demands of the nineteenth century – justifies itself and came about compulsorily in view of the far-reaching progress closely connected with structural changes in the whole school system in modern society. In general, due consideration should be paid in the school to the enormous growth in knowledge together with changes resulting from scientific and technical development and problems arising from political and social changes.

For some time curricula for politico-social studies, which are varyingly described as social studies, community studies, political studies, world studies, among others, have been under revision in the individual Federal States of the Federal Republic. The Federal States issued so-called framework plans or framework guidelines for the various school branches and levels to provide teachers with orientation aids. However, alongside strong approval of individual drafts, numerous knowledgeable critics made their voices heard, not only from the ranks of the Opposition, who warned against confusing modernization with progress.

A dispute without parallel in recent German scholastic history has broken out in the Federal State of Hesse. It was caused by the Framework Guidelines – initially presented for discussion – for the teaching of German and social studies (interdisciplinary instruction in history, geography and social studies). The Education Ministers' draft finally became the subject of Question Time in the Hessian State Legislature.

The draft, still ambiguously formulated in many parts and frequently revised, was devised by young teachers at the behest of the Hessian Education Minister von Friedeburg. The authors were criticized in particular for allowing history and geography to disappear from the traditional range of subjects, radically reducing the number of literature and orthography lessons and teaching Hessian pupils to think in terms of conflicts and class warfare. It would go beyond the framework of this report if the pros and cons of the specialized discussions carried on for years were to be described here. Suffice to say in advance that among the opponents a consensus more readily appears to be forming on a generally formulated definition of the subject than on its definite contents and the teaching method to be adopted.

Progressive educators see the goal of social studies as being more than mere imparting of knowledge via political, social, economic and legal institutions. They are more concerned with awakening interest in these things and, with the aid of a knowledge of interrelationships and events, making people conscious of their own position in society and finally recognizing possibilities of realizing one's own expectations. Therefore, the kernel of social studies is an understanding of the dependence of personal conditions on social ones; existing structures (for example privileges) are not to be regarded as the God-given natural order of things but rather as the result of struggles between pressure groups. The goal is the "articulate citizen" capable of criticism and thus the creation of the preconditions for democracy and further democratization.

II.

Social Studies Curriculum – Political Plan of Action

Professor von Cube, the educationalist, has likened the educational process to steering a ship into a particular harbour: "The captain fixes the destination,

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the navigator establishes the position of the ship at any given time and the helmsman sets the rudder accordingly. The ship can only reach the destination fixed by the captain, despite wind and currents, by following a continuously adjusted course."

Various ways of devising curricula have been developed in the Federal Republic of Germany which not only differ completely in intention but also in learning aims and the choice of material. Curriculum is the technical term and at one time meant nothing more than "teaching plan". The content of this description acquired an important extension as a result of a deviation via American literature. Today, in pedagogical jargon, the word curriculum embraces the whole system of teaching contents, their aquisition and usage. In contrast to traditional teaching plans, the curriculum demands learning aims which are both clearly defined and reviewable.

Professor Mickel, the education scientist, has quite rightly pointed out that teaching plans were milestones in modern school history. Whereas formerly the inclusion of the natural sciences in the catalogue of subjects, along with the creation of new types of schools (Realschule, Oberrealschule and Realgymnasium) were discussed as important events, today the wrangling between specialist organizations and social groups over the number of lessons and contents of political instruction forms the focal point of interest. Regardless of disputes about methods and the varying assessment of the efficiency of political instruction, experts believe they have detected visible signs of progress in the calculable acquisition of factual knowledge by pupils by means of tests. They also assert that there has been increased readiness to be politically active. Whether this is due to the schools or other institutes such as certain mass media, political youth organizations and others, is not clear.

Teaching plans as the organzational plans of teaching contents and school development can result in both bringing about change and also consolidating existing structures. They are used to help determine and practise certain power structures and behaviour patterns. It can definitely be said that teaching plans are the instrument of power with the aid of which certain ideas are to be passed on to the younger generation for the purpose of maintaining or changing the existing social order.

An example is given from a recent specialized publication which explains how certain premises can play an important role in the compilation of political instruction curricula: the republican state form is generally accepted as the minimum consensus and human rights and liberty are respected. There are also strong group tensions displayed openly or undercover in the Federal Republic of Germany – as in other democratically-governed Western countries. Even the democratic parliamentary form of government is questioned by non parliamentarian groups. Over and above this, the problems – already discussed by Marxism – attached to a national state as such also manifest themselves. Some groups would like to see the state merely as a national cooperative social association whose organizational form could easily be altered along with the changing political constellation in Europe. From this standpoint, it is understandable if people holding this view reject as anachronistic words such as fatherland, patriotism, national and state consciousness. Other groups proceed from the fact that in our times we cannot dispense with a strong national state – by no means however in the sense of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century – if the Federal Republic of Germany does not want to sink into obscurity in European and world politics.

This example demonstrates just how complicated things are since no point of departure can prove that the solution of a socio-political problem can be determined with absolute certainty. The social sciences can merely devise approximate values and produce material for politicians' decisions. However, here too, the results vary widely according to the type of question, the statement of data and methods used. Therefore, the socio-political position determines – corresponding to the political party majority ratios in the individual Federal States – the personal evaluation, aims and material selected for political instruction. Whereas some teaching plans aimed at guaranteeing the smooth integration of the younger generation into the established state social order, others have as their central educational consideration the character of conflict and its rational settlement.

III.
The Variety of Subject Areas

In order to provide pupils with broad and interrelated knowledge, the demand has found support that only in cooperation between the subjects and when orientated to the overall social work of the school can social studies fulfil its commitment, not only from the viewpoint of interdisciplinary contents, but also from the teaching principles to be observed by the subjects in their independent work. The following list demonstrates the variety of social studies subject areas and illustrates the demand made by modern didacticians for interdisciplinary instruction as some Federal States have already put into practice.

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Political Science

Supranational Commitments and Institutions

Current representative national and social orders – international problems, conflicts and settlements = development of major political systems.

The Democratic System of Government

Constitution and constitutional reality in the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR – formation of political views and cooperation = state order.

The Federal State and its Political Problems

Political structure and administrative pattern – legislation, judicial system – new commitments and plans – area planning problems = Federal State planning and policy.

Communal Autonomy

Administrative structure – offices and functions – local government establishments and processes – possibilities for the citizen to participate at local level, pressure groups, political parties = indirect political participation.

Tenant Community and the Citizens

Inhabitants – citizens – behaviour of the population – communal life.

Sociology

Structural Change in the Industrial Society

Communication processes in the mass society – international social problems (particularly developing countries) = general receptiveness to changes in social processes.

Germany's Social Problems

Social structures in the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR – social structures in the industrial society = shaping society.

The Rural Social Sphere

Structure and integration of estates – town and country – "community commitments" in the social sphere – traffic problems = shaping the social scene.

The Socio-Cultural Environment

Population structure institutions, associations, clubs and groups in the immediate vicinity, school system, information and communication on youth and adult education = social environmental orientation.

Family and Neighbours

Family structure – style of living – leisuretime = family life.

Economic Sciences

Supranational Economic Areas

International economic problems (particularly world feeding and supplies) – economic and social policy in various systems = world-wide economic interdependence.

The Economy in a Social Constitutional State

Basic features and problems of national economy – vocational structures in the modern working world = economic safeguarding of existence.

Concerns and Their Social Environment

Federal State economic structure – basic questions concerning operating efficiency, social partner – works constitution, co-determination = economic cooperation.

The Industrial Society Domestic Scene

Vocational structure – production and service conditions – possibilities of vocational training and further training = job and professional attainment.

Household and Economic Environment

Property – needs – advertizing – money – consumption = households.

IV.

Mastering Life Via Behaviour Patterns

Didactics have not failed to define learning aims as striven for via the medium of the various social studies subject areas; here too the recommendations of the commissions (operating in some cases with widely differing points of departure and working methods) which have been devised at the behest of the Federal State Education Ministries or within the framework of university research work, have been

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put into teaching practice or are at the preliminary decision stage. Professor Mickel, the education scientist, believes that their point of departure can only be increasing the part played by science and mechanization in our lives to produce behaviour patterns demanded by life. These include, in the main, political, occupational and educational demands made on modern man today. Children and young people should learn how to hold their own in the face of system and material pressures and against all forms of violence, against majorities and minorities. Added to this are the acquisition of "public virtues", living with conflicts, realizing one's own situation, demanded by Professor Ralf Dahrendorf. State education in a pluralistic, open society will largely have to dispense with ethical, normative postulates.

Professor von Hentig, the educationalist, attempted to define learning and educational aims in general terms. These are as follows for the political sphere: "The political, educational and learning aims of the comprehensive school would be portraying social problems within a field of controlled, realistic experience. Power, equality, hierarchy, minorities, dependences, openmindedness, laws, regulations, resistance, groupings, isolation and, again and again, the wealth and justification of individual goals.

- to demonstrate how these problems can be jointly understood and solved without suppressing individual aims.
- to analyse the meaning of equality of opportunity from within one's own institution and using it as a subject for analysis; what always blocks its progress, making known how one can and must continue the struggle to realize it.
- and to practise this over the years, in a practical but clever manner with the help of science and thus making purposeful use of it.

Quite rightly, Mickel points out that in educational theory and practice the "importance of fundamental problems of this kind" to the Federal Republic of Germany was apparently only realized very late. Although all modern didactics contain statements on the school sciences, the selection and interrelationship between subjects, the structure and graduation of educational contents, age-group conformity, educational aims, the organic-genetic arrangement of teaching material, no mention is made of the theory of the teaching plan or the practice of teaching plan construction. Only now is more intensive attention being paid in some Federal States to questions concerning teaching plans in addition to the Max Planck Institute for Educational Research in Berlin (West), the German Institute of Pedagogical Research in Frankfurt-on-Main, the German Institute of Educational Science in Münster, the Federal Education and Science Ministry and the German Central Educational Institute in East Berlin.

V.

A curriculum for social studies

A Guide-Line Commission headed by the educationalist Rolf Schörken and set up on behalf of the Education Ministry in Northrhine-Westphalia has outlined its suggestions for the development of curricula in the area of social studies in this Federal State with the largest budget in the Federal Republic of Germany for schools and higher education. They have now been absorbed into the guide-lines for political instruction and are intended, in the words of the Education Minister for Northrhine-Westphalia, Jürgen Girgensohn, to provide a basis for the intensification and standardization of political education. Rolf Schörken has prepared a detailed report on this, providing a thorough insight into the thematic structure, significance and range of commitments of this subject.

This survey states that a stepping-up of political instruction has become an absolute "must" in view of the enormously increased interest in politics on the part of the pupils in the last few years, and also in view of the fact that schools have concerned themselves too little with current political, social and economic questions. A further argument is provided by the lowering of the voting age to 18, imposing a pattern of political responsibility education-wise which cannot be ignored by schools. The curriculum was therefore faced with the demand of the inclusion of preparatory measures aimed at giving teaching staff the greatest amount of concrete help as possible. In the Commission's view, however, there will be sufficient trained social science teaching staff available in a relatively short time, since young social scientists have displayed greater readiness to take up teaching following the introduction of this subject into the school curriculum. The work by the Commission also included criticism of traditional guide-lines. The author of the report underlines the five points drawing the main criticism:

1. The non-committal nature and generality of proposed aims (terms such as "obligation", "responsibility", "qualification" and so on facilitate, admittedly, the consensus of the groups involved, but are in reality nothing but empty words).
2. The laying down of "material" catalogues devoid of didactical motivation.
3. Lack of discrimination between subject content and methods.

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4. Complete absence of any train of thought revealing why and in what way this or that guide-line content has been arrived at.

5. No indication whatsoever how the various learning objectives are to be realized.

It was also part of the Commission's brief to devise guide-lines and didactical assistance of a type which could no longer attract objections of this nature.

For this reason the Commission attached the utmost importance to presenting in great detail the correlation of basic ideas and motivation in connection with this revised curriculum. The intention was to provide a means of developing curricula in such a way that didactical decisions were made (as far as possible) independent of the individual characteristics of the teachers in question. Furthermore it should make possible the localizing and identifying didactical decisions as well as analysing their prerequisites, their motivation and their consequences.

According to Prof. Schörken, curriculum strategy of this type should be able to justify the didactical decisions contained in the teaching plan, whether it be a matter of learning objectives, teaching processes, content or themes. This strategy must be in the position to analyse or describe the social and pedagogical basic conditions of political instruction as well as the possible repercussions on school and society, and consequently to manifest the relationship between the teaching objectives and the political behaviour of the active, democratic citizen.

The Commission regarded the paramount result of their deliberations to be the compilation of a catalogue of qualifications setting out the general learning aims of political instruction. They are considered to be of prime importance in the new curriculum. From these were then derived the learning objectives of the first and second order. By this is meant behaviour patterns necessary to master situations occurring in life. They are defined as ultimate attitudes i.e. on the part of adults or the so-called active citizen. In order not to run the risk of overtaxing young people at school, all learning objectives, themes, methods and sequences must be directed towards and culminate in the so-called qualifications. Towards this end qualification 4 and 9 can be taken as examples.

Qualification 4 illustrates the Commission's opinion, that political instruction cannot consist solely of learning to understand and to catch up on thought-processes, but be prepared to include internal and external resistance (opposition) in their concept. If this does not happen in good time, the results can turn out to be discouragement and anti-political emotions on coming face-to-face with politics at a later date. In such cases political education would have achieved the exact opposite effect to that originally intended.

Qualification 4: The ability and willingness to think in terms of political alternatives, to take sides and, if needs be, to attempt the realization of decisions even when subjected to the pressure sanctions.

Qualification description:

This qualification contains three elements: thinking in alternatives, taking sides and realizing decisions. Thinking in alternatives demands prior knowledge of the various possible solutions to social problems. It is aimed at a questioning attitude to social processes and examines interests and their legitimation. Over and above this, thinking in alternative terms encourages the formulation of new suggested proposals.

The readiness to take sides is intended to prevent political education becoming bogged down in analysis and the assembling of suggested solutions. A definite partisan attitude based on carefully analysed personal interests and convictions should be given every encouragement.

Partisanship and the reaching of decisions trigger off tensions which have to be endured if a committed attitude is to enjoy some degree of permanence. This is not possible without knowledge of negative as well as positive sanctions (counter-measures, punishments, rewards), of evasive and adaptive mechanisms and resistive tactics.

Learning aims of the 1st and 2nd order

1. The ability by means of thinking in alternative political terms to recognize dependencies.

a) The ability to recognize the controversy in a given political area.

b) The ability to establish the basic values, norms and interests within controversies.

c) The ability, within a given regulative process, to develop alternatives bearing the stamp of other norms and interests.

2. The ability, via partisanship, to exercise the right of self-determination in political conflicts.

a) The ability to offer an opinion after careful analysis of a political theme.

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b) The ability to discuss the relationship between factors governing existing regulations and those governing alternatives.

c) The ability to distinguish between possible solutions to political problems proposed by a third party as opposed to oneself.

d) The ability to take a definite decision on a possible solution to problems of a social nature because it seems expedient.

3. The ability to reach decisions in the face of sanctions.

a) The ability, via partisanship in politically controversial questions, to reflect on and calculate the subsequent consequences.

b) The ability and the readiness to express personal partisanship publically.

c) The ability to defend oneself against sanctions by suitable means, e.g. by acting in solidarity.

The commission takes it upon itself to point to the relatively pronounced abstract character of these learning objectives. They are to be associated directly with the concrete teaching process and linked with definite content and instructional methods. The main features of such an operational learning description are:

1. The objective must be observable, i.e. it must be described in perceptible action,
2. and it must be, in each case, wholly or partially identical (as far as content is concerned) with the superordinate learning objective.

It becomes apparent from Qualification 9 that a much criticized defect in political education is to be avoided, i.e. the neglect of emotional attitudes and social behaviour.

Qualification 9

The ability and readiness to work as a member of different social groups and to display open-mindedness to their demands and high expectations, to withstand the weight of the "ego-image", to take advantage of every opportunity to modify and extend this image – something which one should also grant and facilitate in others.

Qualification description

Political instruction is realized in the area of social structures. It is influenced and encouraged within the framework of group processes. The subsequent emotions and feelings remain often submerged but nevertheless play a decisive role when it comes to presumed rational behaviour. The intention of these qualifications is to create greater awareness of these unsuspected reactions and to consequently exercise greater control over them via relevant social education (including emotional learning).

It is the Commission's intention that the "ego image" continue to be strengthened since social pressures within groups i.e. norms, taboos and sanctions, can assume such overpowering proportions that all "ego" self-assertion is shattered, forcing the individual, for instance, to conform, against his better judgement and wishes. The learning aims in this respect stress the two aspects from which social groups can be viewed: firstly from a sociological point of view, and secondly from a socio-psychological (or, to be more exact from a "group-dynamic") point of view.

Apart from cognitive ability (i.e. the realization) and effort, this qualification demands a developed sense of perception for personal feelings, emotions and needs as well as for those of other group-members. This sense of perception, however, must be backed up by a sufficient sense of ego; otherwise the confrontation between personal perceptive faculties and those of third parties during the course of group processes can result (in the absence of a sufficiently pronounced ego) in identity crises (e.g. defensive reactions such as agression or regression). Such processes force the individual to adapt to the group. A realistic consciousness of dependency develops in increasing measure from the original dependency as a child in the family and in other groups (such as kindergartens, play-groups etc). Within the development of this realistic consciousness can be found a point of departure which can help to promote reality-control on the part of individual members of a group and thus bring about a change in behaviour. This process of change (which begins with a personal corrective procedure) should lead to an extension of the ego-image. Empathy and mutual assistance on the part of group-members are a means of overcoming subsequent crises, making possible extensions and changes to the ego-image.

Learning aims of the 1st and 2nd order

1. The ability and readiness within a social group to fulfil the expectations of one's role, to satisfy the demands of behaviour, to realize and accept the consequences of not doing so. (Sociological aspect)

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a) The ability and readiness in different social groups to fulfil differing expectations of one's role, to satisfy the demands of behaviour, to realize and accept the consequences from not doing so. (Sociological aspect)

b) The ability and readiness to examine the social demands made of one and thence to acquire a detached view of one's role and to make any necessary changes. (Sociological aspect)

2. The ability and readiness within a social group to respect those members whose individual attitude does not correspond in thought or deed to the group norms, to ackowledge and make use of their particular function within the group. (Sociological aspect)

3. The ability to sustain the weight of the "ego-image" and to make every effort not to adopt a hostile or defensive attitude, i.e. not to defy or refute, to redispose, project or flee. (Psychological aspect)

a) The ability and readiness to see and acknowledge new realities and to exploit the opportunities of changing and extending the "ego-image". (Psychological aspect)

b) The ability and readiness to recognize and understand identity crises on the part of group-members and to help overcome them. (Psychological aspect)

The Commission wishes to ensure that curriculum content and theme are neither the subjective result of a "good idea" on the part of the teacher nor merely left in the hands of a commission, nor simply taken over by other basically scientific disciplines. In order to develop content and theme systematically and to guarantee their orientation towards the learning aims and qualifications, a procedure was favoured by means of which situation areas of political activity and learning (school, family, spare time, occupation, public, international relations) could be directly linked with active intentions (interaction, communication, preventive measures, consumption, production, co-determination, organization). In this connection the content varies; for Class 9, for instance, the situation area of "spare time" (within the action radius of "preventive measures – consumption – co-determination") throws up the theme: "What I do with my spare time is entirely my affair!" (opportunities and limits of recreational activity). Contents and problems: towards the leisure-time society, recreational activities and their ideals, environmental problems and the leisure industry. Consumption begs the theme: "Made-to-measure holidays" (leisure activity and leisure industry). Contents and problems: juvenile sub-cultures, youth and commercial publicity, holidays for the masses, the economic significance of leisure industries, leisure-time as the "modus vivendi" of the future within the situation-area "general public" the action radius "communication" offers the theme: "Information or manipulation" (responsibilites and "modus operandi" of the mass media). Contents and problems: "News and opinion". Who decides on what is to be published? "Fighting Press" Publicity and editorial section.

A catalogue of themes was devised in this way by the Commission, fulfilling the following conditions: it ensures, by and large, the realization of teaching aims and offers both teacher and class several alternatives leading to the objective. The independent nature of this procedure for the outlining of the problems places the teacher in the position where he can evolve (within the intentions of the guide-lines) his own themes (topics) and his annual schedules.

VI.

The question of politicizing teaching

Within the field of "social studies" taught at schools in the Federal Republic of Germany there are related and opposing forces striving to bring about a revision of the subject or to adhere to the form currently practised. Some curricula have definite political overtones; others have a marked historical or sociological slant. In the case of glaringly politically orientated curricula, a particularly outstanding example of which is offered by the framework guide-lines (in the Federal State of Hesse) for social studies teaching, a genuine fear of political indoctrination has been expressed by countless politicians and educational experts. Criticism was, inter alia, particularly aimed at the lack of transparency (for the pupils) of objectives and methods within the guide-lines. Nevertheless, this draft which has been both sharply criticized and vehemently defended, has attracted a certain amount of importance inasmuch as it triggered off discussions on the "politicization of teaching" both among the experts as well as among pupils and parents. Journalist Rolf Walter Leonhard described it thus: "Efforts are being made to formulate in public what has thus far only been fermenting and making bubbles. It's worth talking about and, if needs be, having a good row about".

The volume of criticism compelled the Hessian initiators of the guide-lines to state precisely their views on school reform; the paper presented some little while ago reveals that, in this case, it is more than a matter of a mere face-lift. The revised version shows quite clearly (when compared with the previous one) the politically neuralgic points (apart from those

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whose woolly formulation gave rise to misunderstanding) which provided the critics with ammunition to fire their broadsides at the Hessian Guide-Lines.

Whereas the first version, for instance, had merely taken the "precept of democracy" contained in the Constitution as a call – whatever this may mean – for "democratization", the second version refers directly to the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Hessian Constitution and demands in concrete terms that school instruction should impart the ability to recognize "anti-constitutional currents" in good time. In this connection are mentioned: single lists of candidates at polling time, obstruction of the secret voting system, and general press censorship.

The term "conflict", a sort of negative red rag for politicians and educationalists of a conservative ilk who suspected that this was establishing a close link with "class conflict", was much more carefully used in the revised version. The proposed objective of devising strategies in teaching "which would create a suitable platform for the waging of social conflicts" has been completely left out. There is no particular need to seek the reasons for this demand being objected to. The unmistakeably formulated call for school instruction in social studies to offer guide-lines on social behaviour was watered down or rather associated with a dimension whereby the emphasis was placed on a knowledge of social basic structures as the essential for any form of "considered action". The term "compromise" – a word foreign to all dogmatic political creeds – enjoys a firm place in the revised version: "It is possible and necessary to be constantly in search of compromises."

As far as the conditions for the realization of learning objectives are concerned, the guide-lines tackle in detail the ambiguity of such terms as "power" and "rule" and highlight the multiplicity of possible interpretations. The outlining of these differing concepts reflects the moderate attitude that it is not the task of the guide-lines to tie itself down to anyone of the possible interpretations. On the contrary, it is their intent to illuminate the consequences "of the term power being used in this or that sense and who is doing it and for what reasons in each case."

Over and above this, it is of utmost importance to make due allowance for contraversial interpretations, whilst a further intention of the revised guide-lines is to make pupils aware of "how such achievements as freedom of opinion and social securities were realized and what little guarantee of their permanence is offered by their achievement." A further maxim of the new version is likewise of particular importance. The demand is made of pupils to examine the criteria for forming opinions. Various manipulative forms and techniques should be illustrated in order to create the prerequisites for critical assessment. Admittedly this is qualified by the warning that "pupils should be given the impression that knowledge of such methods automatically enables them to withdraw from their sphere of influence."

To avoid any misunderstandings – the revised version of the Hessian Guide-Lines have not been able to remove many of the critics' reservations, and the argument will continue at both political and pedagogical level. Here the intention is merely indicate how sensitively social groups react when they suspect that their socio-political objectives are being endangered by the up and coming generation; on the other hand, these examples are to substantiate the fact – in the words of the author Hermann Glaser – that criticism may be viewed as a sort of bonus; after all, it did bring about (to the advantage of the Hessian Guide-lines) a certain amount of mental discipline and precision in the selection of definitions.

The undeniably fruitful discussion on the revision of political and social studies in the Federal Republic of Germany seems to have set something in motion which up to now has all too often been dismissed as nothing more than "taking exception" to an understanding of democracy which is solely intent on affirming the status quo. Thus the demands of young educationalists must be regarded from the point of view that political education must become more and more the object of research so that a corresponding pattern of teaching can be evolved and the results controlled. The educationalist Prof. Mickel stresses that the school as such must be transformed into a democratic institute, whose activities must be considered as public. A democratic climate must created of the type where the behaviour of all those using it are permanently reminded of their socio-political importance. Tension and conflict would then no longer be viewed as undesirable disturbing factors, but accepted as a normal occurrence. This, however, assumes an advanced stage of consciousness which is still only in embryo.

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Editorial closing date: 4. 9. 1974

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